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ABSTRACT

The power of effective schools lies not in their specific characteristics, but in their individual culture formation; a shared understanding of what ought to be symbolized by the behavior of all people involved in the school is part of that culture. The school cultural orientations of seven male and five female first-time principals (10 white and 2 black), representing five states, are presented in this paper. Over the course of 1 year, principals were both interviewed by telephone biweekly and observed on three occasions for two consecutive days. After an examination of initial data, follow-up interviews were conducted focusing on: (1) the cultural linkages recognized, exhibited, and manipulated by the beginning principals; (2) the systems coupling patterns of these principals; and (3) the leadership values the principals espoused and displayed. A final analysis of data revealed that the subjects were weak in building internal cultural linkages to improve instruction; exhibited tightly coupled patterns regarding most systems; and felt that they were providing cultural leadership by actions they inaccurately defined as purposing, empowering, and converting. Implications for future research and for principal preparation programs are briefly addressed. (KM)

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CULTURAL ORIENTATIONS OF FIRST-TIME HIGH SCHOOL PRINCIPALS DURING SELECTION AND ENTRY

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ABSTRACT

CULTURAL ORIENTATIONS OF FIRST-TIME HIGH SCHOOL PRINCIPALS DURING SELECTION AND ENTRY

This paper presents the school culture orientations of 12 first-time high school principals. Drawing on the concepts of cultural linkages, loose coupling, and leadership values, the author addresses three major questions:

(1) What cultural linkages, are recognized, exhibited, and manipulated by beginning principals?

(2) What coupling patterns are exhibited by beginning principals?

(3) What leadership values do beginning principals espouse and display?

The analysis of interview data reveals that the subjects were weak in building internal cultural linkages to improve instruction; exhibited tightly coupled patterns regarding most systems; and felt that they were providing cultural leadership by actions they inaccurately defined as purposing, empowering, and converting.

CULTURAL ORIENTATIONS OF FIRST-TIME HIGH SCHOOL PRINCIPALS DURING SELECTION AND ENTRY

In recent years, educational researchers have emphasized the critical role of the principal in creating an effective school (Edmonds, 1981), described what effective principals do (Blumberg & Greenfield, 1980; McCurdy, 1983; Bossert, 1985; Greenfield, 1987), and supported development of a strong school culture (Firestone and Corbett, 1988). At the same time, studies of effective schooling which prescribe specific goals, roles, behaviors, and outcomes to be copied by educators in any context have also been criticized not only for their methodology (Clark, Lotto, & Astuto, 1984) but also for their neglect of the total culture of the school (Purkey & Smith, 1983).

This body of research is helping us begin to understand successful schooling, the nature of educational leadership, and linkages between school culture and achievement, but it provides little assistance to the beginning principal, whose challenges and experiences may differ radically from those of an experienced principal. In particular, little is known about the cultural,

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symbolic, or change orientations of beginning principals. For example, what symbolic, operational, and qualitative cultural elements do beginning principals discern and attempt to place as they come to know their schools and people? How do they deal with transitions, bring about change, and revitalize the instructional culture of a school? Finally, what image do they project as they attempt to fill many roles related to school culture and change?

To answer these questions, the present study examined the "cultural orientations" of 12 first-time high school principals during the selection and entry phases of their careers. Selection is defined for purposes of this paper as the recruitment, selection, and job assignment procedures that take place before the principal reports to the site. Entry is defined as the first year on the job.

Background

Introduction

Understanding cultural transformation and school improvement requires a reexamination of the major contributions to the planned change literature from a cultural perspective, investigations of the norms and values that support and inhibit change and improvement, and examinations of intentional efforts to shape a school's culture. The appearance of a new administrator in a school provides excellent opportunities to study cultural movement and conflict (Firestone & Corbett, 1988).

It is important to note two additional themes which may emerge at such a time: change as loss, and ritual as respite or repair. Since a succession of unresolved changes and experiences can unravel the fabric of a society, it is critical for any new principal to stay tuned in to the potential sense of individual or collective loss and grief that accompanies cultural change as well as to provide collective rituals that assuage fears and bring new structures in gently (Deal, 1985). This is particularly challenging to a new principal, as the new principalship itself represents a massive change and potential loss for a school.

The Beginning Principal and School Culture Studies

Studies of beginning principals have described problems or concerns of (a) socialization to the profession and system or a lack of "knowing the ropes" (Daresh, 1986), (b) leadership succession (Hart, 1985; Miskel & Cosgrove, 1984), and a need to achieve security and acceptance - or a focus on the lower levels

of a Maslow-like hierarchy of concerns - by learning what people value and "how things are done around here" (Greenfield, 1985a). Kellerher's (1982) case study of his own new principalship reflected a recognition of his failure to understand the local culture, including his failure to acknowledge local norms about operations, student management, and instruction; and his naive movement with plans which, in fact, suggested a change in the community's social structure. Indeed, this is a major theme which emerges in school culture literature; Greenfield (1985b) suggests, "If one is to succeed in changing aspects of a social or cultural system, one must first be well acquainted with the system, knowledgeable but not blinded by unexamined underlying assumptions and values. Furthermore, if one is to act on the system from within the system, one must gain access to and acceptance among those who control participation in the system..." (p. 111).

Successful School Culture: More than Symbols

The power of effective schools lies not in their specific characteristics but in the way they form an "ethos" or culture (Rutter, Maugham, Mortimer, Ousten, & Smith, 1979). Beyond mere artifacts, it is a shared understanding of what ought to be symbolized by behavior of all people in the school are part of this culture. Values for behavior include high expectations (Brookover, Beady, Flood, Schweitzer, & Wisenbaker, 1979), high commitment to work, an action orientation, professional autonomy, recognition for good performance, and available slack time (Clark et al., 1984). Thus, within the normative structure of the highly achieving school

is the fact that most members consistently espouse (in word and deed) the presence of particular norms and values (Firestone & Corbett, 1988). Twelve norms which give shape to a school's culture include collegiality, experimentation, high expectations, trust and confidence, tangible support, reaching out to the knowledge bases, appreciation and recognition, caring-celebration-humor, involvement in decision making, protection of what's important, traditions, and honest/open communication (Saphier & King, 1985). It is this going beyond a limited view of effectiveness (safety, mission, instructional leadership, objective-curriculum-teaching alignment) to a higher order, a more qualitative intellectual and academic view of effectiveness, which leads to a more comprehensive and expansive concept of the culture of a successful school (Sergiovanni, 1987). For example, principals do not merely supervise; they inspire teachers and they take action to ensure that values are embodied in teachers' actions.

Three Concepts: Linkages, Loose Coupling, and Leadership Values

For purpose of this study, beginning principals were studied on three dimensions of culture: the cultural linkages to improving instruction, the concept of loosely and tightly coupled systems, and culture-related leadership values.

Concept One: Linkages

Culture explains stable patterns across variable conditions in schools, gives meaning to instructional activity, provides a

bridge between action and results, and fuses individual identity with collective destiny. It also provides the facade that evokes faith and confidence among outsiders (Meyer & Rowan, 1983). Cultural linkages are "bonds" constructed from common purpose, shared vision, high performance goals, mutual commitment, supportive relationships, high identity, trust, empowerment, and a sense of community. Strong "bonds" make it easier for educators to move from "boxes" (bureaucracy) to "bubbles" (human concerns and realities) as necessary in the complex setting of schools and their communities (Hurst, 1984).

Firestone and Wilson (1985) have argued that cultural and bureaucratic linkages independently and interactively influence the quality of instruction in schools. Their cultural linkages to improving instruction in schools include (a) cultural content (commitment to quality service; willingness to take risks; a setting where individuals can experiment and take initiative; and close ties to the outside world for ideas, political support, and financial support), (b) cultural denotation (symbols including stories, icons, and rituals; and communication patterns), and (c) the principal's influence on the school's culture (initiating and reducing spread of stories, creation and manipulation of symbols and rituals, and communication of the culture).

In another blend of characteristics of effective or innovative schools with those of strong organizational cultures, Deal (1985b) notes the rational-technical emphasis of schools on goals, leadership, planning, meetings, and training. This is contrasted

with the cultural symbolic emphasis on values, heroes and heroines, rituals, and beliefs. What is significant is the way the language and concepts of culture can be applied to local school improvement efforts. Deal also details ways to shape organizational cultures: espousing values and using them in decision-making, anointing heroes and heroines, establishing rituals, holding and emphasizing ceremonies, and promulgating positive stories.

Concept Two: Loose Coupling

Firestone (1985) explored explanations for more or less loosely coupled systems in schools, suggesting that the more simplified purposes of elementary schools-as opposed to individual (professionalism, gender) or organizational (size, specialization) variables - yield higher goal consensus and centralization at this level. Coupling dimensions included horizontal and vertical communication, centralization of instruction and resources, facilitative leadership, and goal consensus. Across-the-board loosely coupled systems are generally seen as dysfunctional for schools seeking to improve student performance; a breakdown in one portion of a loosely coupled system may not spread but is hard to repair, an individual may do what interests him or her but it is hard to make system-wide changes, and the system is unable to coalesce to respond to major threats (Weick, 1982).

While we do not know much about the reasons for and consequences of coupling patterns at different levels, it appears that attention to culture is part of the overall study of patterns of coupling in organizations. Peters and Waterman (1982) note the

pattern of simultaneous loose and tight couplings; formal mechanisms such as direct supervision, work process standardization, and outcome standardization are loose; while tight coupling comes through a strong culture of shared values and common views of things. Sergiovanni (1984) supported this combination of tightly structured values and a loosely coupled system in his description of the cultural and symbolic forces of leadership. In later work (Sergiovanni, 1987), he described a collective ideology, shared values and sentiments, and norms defining acceptable behavior which supersede the substance of culture. In this context, for example, a strong and productive culture may not even be harmonious - as long as the value of the culture is agreeing to disagree.

Concept Three: Leadership Values

In his Clockworks II mindscape, Sergiovanni (1987a,b) combines ideas of school culture, socially constructed reality, and semantic leadership to provide "new leadership values." They include:

* leadership by purpose
* leadership by empowerment
* leadership as power to accomplish
* leadership density
* leadership and quality control
* leadership by outrage
* leadership by conversion
* leadership by simplicity
* leadership as reflection in action

(1987a, 340-343; 1987b, 121-124)

With recent growth in interest in the cultural side of organizations in organizational studies (Smircich, 1983) and the recognition that the main leadership responsibility of the principal is to create coherence (or glue) between the organization's basic purposes and its culture (Selznick, 1957), now is the time to examine leadership values, tight and loose couplings in schools, and linkages as they relate to school culture. It may be that overload of ambiguous purposes and teacher isolation make for weak cultural linkages in schools (Firestone & Wilson, 1985), yet it remains for us to discover how much of a school's culture can be influenced by a principal, even a beginning principal. It is in this "educational clan," cohered by the glue of a motivating and nearly total socialization of its members, that a leader potentially lifts the organization from functional adequacy to educational excellence (Owens, 1987). If leadership is culture management, then, have we developed in our beginning principals the emotional strength, the depth of vision, the capacity for self-insight and objectivity, the ability to create involvement and participation, the motivation and skill to change the cultural assumptions (Schein, 1985)?

The Research Problem

The purpose of this study was to document and describe the school culture orientations of first-time high school principals during the selection and entry phases of their careers. The researcher sought to answer the following questions:

1. What cultural linkages (à la Firestone & Wilson) do beginning principals recognize and effect?
2. What coupling patterns (à la Weick) do beginning principals exhibit?
3. What leadership values (à la Sergiovanni) do beginning principals espouse and display?

Related questions included:

1. How do beginning principals deal with transitions, bring about change and revitalize the culture of a school in relation to the elements (in 1, 2, and 3 above)?
2. What image do beginning principals project to staff and parents as they work with school culture elements?

Procedures

The data analyzed in this study were gathered as part of the Beginning Principal Study (BPS) currently being conducted by a team of two researchers at the University of Colorado at Denver in collaboration with seven researchers at the University of Florida's Research and Development Center. The purpose of the two-year (1987-89) BPS is to document and to describe the experiences, challenges, and keys to success common to the first-year principal. In addition, the BPS team will develop research-based systems of support for future beginning principals as well as a model training program for the principalship.

The sample for the cultural orientation study consisted of 12 first-time high school principals, seven male and five female, two black and ten white, in five states. Within the constraints posed

by the logistics of gathering data over great distances and at a variety of out-of-state locations, the study sites were selected to ensure geographic and demographic representation. Table I indicates the sex, race, geographic distribution, and type of school setting to which the subjects were assigned.

Table I

BPS Participants: Sex, Race, Geographical Distribution, School Setting, and Enrollment

Sex	Race	Region	School Setting	Enrollment
Male	Black	Midwest	City	590
Female	White	Midwest	Suburban	2,100
Male	White	Midwest	Suburban	1,600
Male	White	East	Rural	1,332
Male	White	East	Suburban	1,400
Female	White	East	Suburban	2,500
Male	White	West	City	1,500
Female	Black	West	Inner City	1,800
Female	White	West	Suburban	1,795
Female	White	Southeast	Suburban	1,583
Male	White	Southeast	Rural	550
Female	White	Southeast	Suburban	2,386

Of the 12 principals, ten had been assistant principals prior to becoming principal; one had been a middle school principal; and one had been a district-level science coordinator.

During the data gathering phase of the larger Beginning Principal Study, each researcher was assigned to one or two principals during the 1987-88 school year for the purpose of observing and documenting the principal's first year. The research methods included a combination of at least three, two-day on-site observations and interviews as well as one-hour bi-weekly telephone interviews conducted by each researcher. The current BPS data base includes the taped (and transcribed) interviews, the researcher's field notes, and journals kept by the study principals. Additional data in the form of school policy documents, newspaper articles featuring the study principals, demographic information on the schools and districts, and memos written by the subjects were also gathered.

The present study of the principals' cultural orientations adhered to the qualitative methodology known as grounded theory research (Miles & Huberman, 1984). In line with this approach, each BPS researcher introduced into his or her data collection a semi-structured interview schedule (see Appendix A) designed to explore different dimensions of the subjects' cultural orientations. As initial data were gathered and examined by the researcher and the rest of the BPS team, tentative categories or "themes" were identified. To confirm or disprove the presence of these categories or themes across the entire data set and to create

"thicker" descriptions, additional questions in the form of tentative hypotheses were formulated. In follow-up interviews, the researchers used these questions to "probe" the subjects in regard to their experiences with the cultural dimensions of the principalship. In this inductive manner, the research team constructed a "profile" of each subject's cultural orientation as well as identified the underlying patterns or commonalities characteristic of all the study principals.

FINDINGS

The analysis of data revealed that beginning principals displayed weak cultural orientations and achievements in the areas of cultural linkages, loose and tight coupling, and leadership values.

Cultural Linkages

There was weak evidence of cultural content as principals worked to influence the quality of instruction in their schools. Half of the principals spoke briefly about having a commitment to quality service or about caring for kids and helping kids to be successful. Fewer than half indicated a willingness to take risks by being open to hearing problems or by making significant changes in policy, activities, or all-school instructional items; such changes were seen as major risks to be attempted only with caution. Half of the subjects reported "wanting, being willing for, trying to get, pleading for, or encouraging" teachers to pursue new ideas.

For example:

> "I made a plea at the beginning of the school year - to the entire faculty....not really a plea, but I let it be known that I would be very receptive to innovativeness."
>
> "I've tried to continue to tell my assistant principals as well as my teachers: anything they would like to try - as long as it doesn't seem to be unsafe or illegal - go for it. I will support them, and if they make a mistake, it's alright."

While all of the subjects reported efforts to maintain ties with the outside world for ideas, political and financial support, fully half of the efforts were on the basic level of providing newsletters, flyers, and articles. The remaining half of the principals were more active, working with advisories and clubs, holding television interviews, coffees, brown bag seminars. Approximately one-fourth of the subjects appeared to be more politically oriented, forming business partnerships, connecting with alumni and other community elements, or even "playing politics":

> "he didn't know I knew (who he was). He gave me a big grin because he is a politician. He said, 'Well, if I can help you in any way....' I said, 'Yes, you can. I would like to have coffee with you one evening. If you folks would organize to have six to ten parents, I would be glad to come out and

visit with you.' He looked at me and gave me the biggest grin. He said, 'I heard about you.'"

"(The board president) said, 'I hear you're getting leaned on." And I said, 'Hey, I'm an educator. I'm not a politician.' He laughed and then he said, 'I'm going to visit your school. And I said, 'Bring alot of company. We need help. 'He said, 'I don't have the votes.' And I said, 'Then get them.'"

In the second area of cultural linkages, cultural denotation, the subjects again reported typical efforts, though with considerably higher frequency. Principals were aware of heroes and heroines in their midst and made efforts to publicize them. They also provided fun, social events for staff members. More decisively, they recognized staff and students and staff with assemblies, awards, an announcements. They also made great efforts to be visible at a variety of events, though most reported related time constraints. In this vein, the principals felt they were (a) learning about the school as well as (b) sending a message of interest and caring to the troops. A few principals indicated a desire to blend tradition with change for improvement, with some difficulty. Deliberate efforts to manipulate the school culture through creation of symbols, symbolic messages, or rituals were infrequent.

The subjects' attempts to influence their schools' cultures were most apparent in communication patterns. Most reported clear attempts to communicate their vision (which was repeatedly confirmed by faculty members as they reviewed the standards they knew they were expected to meet regarding their work, dress, behavior, time commitment, support of students, and espousing of values and philosophy) and their respect for staff members, as well as an openness to discussion.

However, the stories circulating among faculty members were not principal-initiated, positive, culture-building tales but rather complaints in which the new principal was often the target. Making changes without sufficient communication, being critical of all instead of a guilty few, being negative about faculty in an article, constantly pointing out errors, and even being inappropriately silent were typical complaints of faculty members about principals. Several of the subjects spoke of time constraints to communicating more effectively with staff. Most who faced these difficulties reacted defensively:

> "Well, we did that. Do you think that's what they wanted? Hell, no!"
>
> "I'm just telling them it's none of their business."
>
> "I treat them all the same. So I don't see that the trust level has been destroyed."
>
> "Well, like I told them: I'm not here to kiss their behinds."

In only a couple cases were new principles able to handle such complaints from faculty in a sensitive, constructive manner which resulted in a positive outcome or turnaround of the problem.

In sum, the subjects' cultural linkages to improving instruction included fairly passive internal contextual work, more confident external contextual work, standard but superficial denotation, and primarily standard setting and talk without deliberate action to influence the school's culture through communication.

Coupling Dimensions

The combination of tightly structured values and a loosely coupled system did not hold true in the emerging description of cultural orientations of beginning principals as related to instructional matters.

Only two principals ascribed control of instruction to the teachers:

> "Teaching and instruction can be looser. (In) those areas, I don't want to nail that kind of stuff down. But how you get a phone installed in somebody's office ought to be a simple, orderly procedure...tighten that."
>
> "I took a large chunk of that time and met individually with every teacher on my staff...tried to sit down and assure them that I was not here to either infringe on the territory that they had staked out, nor was I here to tell them exactly what to do and how to do it, but to

assure them that I will monitor what they are doing and try to assist them in any way that they wanted - to make their position a more effective teaching position."

More typical was principal talk about holding teachers accountable for (and responsible for correcting problems with) low grades, low test scores, and individual students' academic problems. While two-thirds of the principals displayed tight controls in these areas, fully one-half of them mentioned their own lack of time spent on instructional concerns:

"I am hardly spending any time at all on instruction."

"There is no time to be an instructional leader."

"I need to get into more classes."

"I need to help some in terms of teaching strategies, teaching models, and just basically to supervise the teaching process here at the school."

Indeed, support for instruction usually emerged only in cases of special programs, workshops, and efforts such as cooperative learning initiatives which were often initiated by teachers and merely sanctioned by the principals. Rarely noted was a demonstration lesson or sharing of research on instructional techniques, for example. Principals tightly controlled instructional resources, for the most part. Fifty percent of the principals also tightly controlled lesson plans and the placement and grading of individual, special students.

Finally, while half of the subjects gave evidence of staff involvement in setting goals, mission and priorities,

for fully one-quarter of the subjects shared values and trust were not so evident:

> "I would say the staff is probably not yet united around any one thing or any one person."
>
> "No, I don't think he has lost everything, but he is going to have to start again. He is going to have to show that, 'I trust some of your people's decisions. I'm with you and we're here for a common purpose: the kids.'"
>
> "They still don't trust me and there are some of them I don't trust."
>
> "As each day goes by I get the feeling that above anything else, all that the teachers want me to do is solve their problems."
>
> "I think sometimes what we have is the blind leading the blind, for right now."

This lack of goal agreement is evident regarding supervision and evaluation processes. Only one-fourth of the principals gave evidence of concern for consistency and fairness in supervision processes, and only one-fourth reported successes in the areas of clinical supervision, instructional (personal) credibility, and shared instructional improvement goals.

In additional, little discussion about instruction and little control of instructional resources was ascribed to teachers.

Leadership Values

The third concept studied centered on cultural leadership by demonstrating values. The subjects indicated that they felt they were providing cultural leadership primarily by purposing, empowering, and converting.

Purposing: Purposing actually included more sharing of the principals' own purposes rather than displaying the school's general vision and purpose. All of the subjects made statements about their expectations and their priorities. Most quoted themselves from talks with staff in which they used the word, "I expect...." Expectations included academic excellence, involvement, cooperation, and professionalism.

Empowerment: most subjects believed they were empowering staff members. At the beginning of the year, "empowerment" usually meant that the principal involved teachers in decision-making, used information from faculty members as a resource in decision-making, and working with teachers on various projects. Later in the year, the focus was more on delegating work or making use of others' energy to cope with the load. Few truly understood leadership density or took steps to involve all as true educational leaders. Nor did they ascribe "power to accomplish" or help others to be successful in significant ways. A new note along these lines was the fairly frequent mention (one-half of the subjects) of plans to empower people in the next year:

"I would work better with just the leaders."

"I can see myself having easier times at delegating something - where before it was 'Should I?' or 'Shouldn't I?' - and a real battle inside.

"There are some things that I'll change for next year as far as delegating. I think one thing is finding the right meshing of personalities, as to: Who can really handle that?"

"So I am hopefully moving more to a participatory management concept and team management."

Leadership by conversion: More than half of the subjects demonstrated leadership by conversion, apparently sensing that they were persuasive enough to convert non-believers into believers about their goals.

They also demonstrated some wisdom about the pace of change and need for trust:

"I would like to see some changes occur rapidly. I also know that encouraging people and really inspiring them to make change is a very slow process. You have to build a level of respect and trust so the people will feel free to take a risk and stretch themselves a bit."

"You plant the seed one year and you hope that another year, it begins to germinate."

"Most of my concerns are centered around my staff relationship and being able to persuade them to get on

my wagon. To lead this community in its educational endeavors is probably foremost in my mind each morning."

"My approach is getting acceptance of the goals and then effecting change through acceptance of the goals."

." I think they have to have confidence in you and they have to see you model the thing you are talking about."

Cultural leadership for beginning principals was not an issue of simplicity (having few, uncomplicated protocols). Nor was it a matter of building a culture in the minds and hearts of staff and constituents or of helping educators reflect on their actions. On a few, rare occasions, they provided such leadership by outrage, and perhaps erroneously so:

"We are a unified group of people working toward a common goal.

"That goal to me is, and always will be, the students - that we want to make our students the best they can be. Nothing else - this crap about staff morale, and all of that, that's secondary to me."

Asst. Superintendent: "(He) overreacted by suspending that teacher. But I know he felt very strongly that he had to send a message to that staff, symbolically. He was in charge...."

Instead, leadership for these beginning principals appeared to be focused on (a) listening, gathering information, gradually introducing changes and (b) being tough (written reprimands, "not tolerating that," being in control). Thus

much talk by all of the subjects about such things as building climate, getting input, hearing concerns, having good discussions, admitting mistakes, caring, modeling is seemingly contradicted by a instance of "being the boss", being in control, and being responsible. As one principal put it, "being responsible for every blade of grass that blows in the wind out there...every piece of dust on this floor." One community member summed it up in describing the principal:

> "The one thing that I think I heard most often was the dichotomy or difference between her stated policy of inclusiveness and her actual practice of being quite assertive and taking charge."

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This study described the school culture orientations of twelve first-time high school principals during the first year of their careers. The results indicated that the culture orientations of the subjects were particularly weak in building cultural linkages to improve instruction internally. Most apparent efforts along these lines were standard, verbal, often superficial, and largely ineffective. The subjects tended to believe they were tight on values (such as mission) while they were really merely providing lip service. They claimed to have loosely coupled systems when, in fact, they put much effort into controlling systems. In their own work, which lacked time and focus on instructional concerns, they were minimally successful. The result was a lack of goal

agreement and lack of focus on instruction. Leadership values demonstrated by the subjects included autocratic purposing, token empowerment, and yet a pervasive belief that one can convert clients through persuasion, the right pace of change, and building trust. A general effort to build a culture of instructional improvement through quality control, reflection, shared leadership, and creating a culture in the minds and hearts of people was absent. Indeed, leadership was seen as listening and being tough, a result, perhaps, of the strong sense of responsibility beginning principals have. Indeed, it seemed difficult for principals to let go of even minor tasks.

Though based on a small sample, the findings of this study raise several questions which future researchers could address. In what ways do cultural orientations of principals change during their professional careers? What relationships exist between the cultural orientations identified in this study and success of the beginning high school principal? Would a larger sample of beginning high school principals also identify weak linkages, inappropriate coupling, and weak demonstrations of leadership values as primary dimensions of their cultural orientations? Is there a discernible cultural orientation profile associated with successful high school leadership?

This study also has some implications, albeit tentative, for principal preparation programs. It would seem helpful for such programs to (a) teach concepts of cultural linkage, coupling, and leadership values; as well as possible effects of beginning

principals' actions in these areas; (b) provide opportunities for principals-in-training to study first-hand the development of school culture, especially as it relates to instructional improvement and change in schools; and (c) provide mentoring for principals-in-training (interns as well as first-time principals) as they attempt to build a culture of instructional improvement in their schools.

Today's high schools require the best leadership available. An effective principal clearly understands and deliberately builds a culture of commitment and educational excellence. The results for the present study indicate that the cultural orientation concept needs to be a component in delivery of intern and beginning service support for principals.

APPENDIX A

Interview Questions

(Supplement to year 1 interview transcriptions)

CULTURE

1. What "cultural" elements are beginning principals discerning as they come to know their schools and people? How do they deal with them? How quickly do they pick up on these things? How do they find out about them? [values, heroes, ceremonies, symbols, rituals, communication, networks, etc.]

CHANGE 2. In that schools are "political" (not just rational) and "social" (a jungle as much as a family), how do beginning principals deal with transitions and bring about change?

IMAGE 3. As beginning principals fill many roles (counselor, parent, power broker, statesperson), what "image" do they project/develop? What do their employers see as their image? (This may also relate to the idea of "identity.")

LEADERSHIP 4. As beginning principals provide "ritual" or "symbolic" leadership, are they able to revitalize the culture of a school?

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